

Red Tail Flyer

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July 30, 2004

Tops in Blue comes to town

Performers from the Air Force Tops in Blue World Tour pose at the conclusion of one of their segments while performing for troops at the Sustainer Theater Saturday. The group, recruited from various Air Force bases around the world, is currently touring Air Force bases in the area of responsibility as part of their "Musicology" tour. For more photos of Tops in Blue, turn to page 6.



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Cohen Young

Civil engineer team makes quick runway repairs after attack



Courtesy photo

Senior Airman James Stevens and Airman 1st Class Joe Sledge apply a repair compound to the airfield pavement.

Staff Sgt. Jason Lake

332nd AEW/Public Affairs

The quick work from a team of civil engineers prevented major delays to airfield traffic after a missile attack damaged the airfield recently.

Senior Airmen Jeffery Leigh, James Stevens and Airman 1st Class Joe Sledge, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, got called into action shortly after an alarm red to fix a few "spalls" created from a missile attack. (A spall is a a divot on a runway caused by a rocket or mortar attack.)

Operating in blackout conditions with only a flashlight and pickup

truck headlights to guide them, the team managed to repair the spalls in less than two hours.

Capt. Mark Keels, 332nd ECES deputy commander, commended the team for their quick efforts.

"Spalls, while seemingly harmless, are potentially dangerous to aircraft because the debris left behind can easily be ingested into the jet engine intake or can cause gouges and cuts in aircraft tires which can ultimately cause tire failure during takeoffs and landings," he explained. "The actions taken by the team to expeditiously repair the damage to the (airfield) cannot be taken lightly. Their work ensures the airfield is safe and operational under all circumstances."

Commander's comments

Wing commander: Focus, high morale key to mission success

Col. Blair Hansen

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander



Congratulations! Most of you are at your halfway point of your rotation or beyond. You've probably started to count the weeks, days and wakeups.

You have every right to be proud of yourselves. However, this is not the time to throw caution to the

wind. It's not the time to start "coasting."

We need you to maintain your focus and continue to put the mission first.

You already know the mission is the most important goal. Without your dedication and hard work, our mission accomplishment will deteriorate.

High morale is crucial to our success, but high morale in a deployed location in the AOR comes from knowing you're making a difference and a part of something important. When you get on the airplane to go home, I want you to be proud of two things, what you've done and who you are.

If you were to leave today, all of you could stand tall for what you've done and who you are. However, If you decide you're on the downhill slope now and stop making the mission first though, your pride and our mission will suffer.

What you've done and who you are will be impacted. If the mission isn't your number one goal during the last half of your tour, you'll leave here feeling less than pleased with your accomplishments because you'll know you could have done more.

Keep up your dedication and hard work. Without it, we will not succeed.

You can be proud...

Command Chief Master Sgt. Bernard Trame

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

You can be proud that you chose to serve in your country's armed forces. Only a small portion of the U.S. population has ever served in the military.

You can be proud that you stand for integrity first. Doing what is right when no one is watching is key to our ability to always do more with less.

You can be proud that you put service before self. No one gives more than you do. It is your commitment to efficiency and perfection that allows us to surge during periods of high operations tempo.

You can be proud of helping our country set oppressed people

free. Whether you provide support in a forward area or a reachback operation, every task is but one of the many building blocks necessary to a successful operation.

You can be proud of your role in the birth of a new nation. The people of Iraq are free to think for themselves and make choices.

You can be proud of the humanity and generosity you show to those in need. Democracy in Iraq will only succeed with your continued support through Operation Iraqi Freedom.

You can be proud that you truly know and understand that freedom is never free. We are reminded of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice every day.

I am proud to serve with you.

Murdock takes command at Kirkuk

Capt. Mike Strickler

506th AEG Public Affairs

KIRKUK REGIONAL AIR BASE, Iraq -- On a typically hot and sunny Iraqi mid-morning Col. Phillip Murdock took command of the 506th Air Expeditionary Group during a change of command ceremony Wednesday.

Colonel Murdock assumed command from Col. William Brandt, who served as 506th AEG commander and, previous to that, vice commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. The 332nd AEW commander, Col. Blair Hansen, presided over the change in command.

Kirkuk RAB plays a key role in the coalition efforts to reconstruct Iraq by



Air Force/Capt. Mike Strickler

Senior Master Sgt Ron Filkins, 506th Air Expeditionary Group First Sergeant, overlooks a formation of Krabtown warriors during the change of command ceremony Wednesday.

serving as a logistical hub for U.S. Army and Special Operation Forces, and providing ground-based military air warning and control.

Pride day cleans up Balad



Air Force/Airman 1st Class Heather Norris

Col. Gloria Hoban, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group commander, participates in Air Force Pride Day Wednesday. More than 25 Airmen volunteered to pick up trash around the Tuskegee Town complex.

Blowing away the competition

332nd ECES explosive ordnance disposal aids war fighters one threat at a time

Tech. Sgt. Brian Jones
332nd AEW/Public Affairs

Explosive ordnance disposal is a dangerous business under normal circumstances. But, add the challenges of a deployed environment and a constant threat of attack and EOD truly becomes hazardous duty.

The 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance disposal flight here faces these challenges every day ensuring the mission gets accomplished despite an array of unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices.

"Any time you're in a deployed environment the challenges are magnified," said Chief Master Sgt. David Williamson, 332nd ECES EOD chief deployed from Hill Air Force Base, Utah. "At home, we don't have rockets and mortars flying on base. So, we never deal with those situations."

Balad's EOD technicians are called upon every time the base is attacked. They work through the alarm conditions searching for and destroying munitions that didn't explode when they hit the



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Cohen Young

Staff Sergeant Benjamin Kelly, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron explosive ordnance disposal, prepares munition fuses, flares and .50-caliber rounds for disposal. The EOD unit here is the busiest EOD unit in the Air Force. Sergeant Kelly is deployed from the 39th Civil Engineering Squadron at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey.

base.

"A good night sleep around here is pretty rare," said Chief Williamson.

While unexploded ordnance on base keeps EOD busy, almost half of their jobs involve going "outside the wire," many times in response to IEDs.

"Outside the wire is a different environment. You're always on guard. You never know what you're going to encounter," said Chief Williamson. "It's not

uncommon for us to take small arms fire."

When working off base, EOD is never alone and is always accompanied by an Army security element typically made up of gun trucks or armored personnel carriers.

"It's part of the job. We know that most of our jobs will be outside the wire," said Staff Sgt. Mark Brady, an EOD craftsman deployed from Minot AFB, N.D. "As EOD technicians you have to

be a war fighter, as well as a technician."

In addition to working the perimeter of Balad, EOD technicians are often called upon to travel throughout the theater to support vehicle recovery and munitions disposal operations.

"We respond to vehicles that have been attacked on convoys to make sure they are clean before recovery teams can bring them back," said Chief Williamson.

The 332nd ECES EOD flight regularly sends technicians to forward operating bases to help with disposal operations. It was during one such mission that Sergeant Brady encountered a roadside IED.

"We got a call from the Army saying that they had found an IED," Sergeant Brady said. "It was unusual in that it had a wire attached heading back in to the desert."

The EOD team used one of their robots to remotely disarm the IED and blew it up in place.

"All that was needed was somebody on the other end of that wire and they could have taken out a vehicle," said Sergeant Brady.

See EOD, Page 5

Is this a UXO?



Yes. This BLU-63 bomblet is just a little smaller than the leatherman sitting beside it. Despite its small size, an encounter with one of these could be deadly.



Yes. This S-5K 57mm rocket was found in the middle of the night. Base officials advise people to carry flashlights to avoid stepping on UXOs like these.



Yes. This 3.5" Bazooka was uncovered behind a patch of grass. Luckily, the patch of grass gave this UXO's position away.



Yes. This is an S-5K 57mm rocket that lodged into the ground rather than exploding its one pound explosive shell.



No. However, this chili cheese hot dog is capable of creating a different kind of bomb.

Homemade relic takes on a life of its own

Staff Sgt. Jason Lake

332nd AEW/Public Affairs

An Airman here has turned up missing.

His last reported sighting was at the 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron maintenance hangars with his girlfriend, Senior Airman Alissa Engel, a weapons loader here.

"I don't know where he went," Engel said hysterically. "I heard that he ran off with a bunch of girls from another squadron."

As of Thursday afternoon, security forces officials had not yet charged the individual... possibly because the Airman is a foot tall and made of yarn and cotton.

Senior Master Sgt. Mark Giskaas, a Guardsman deployed here from the 120th Fighter Wing at Great Falls International Airport, Mont., is the owner of the small "action figure" he and his coworkers affectionately call 'Mini-Mark.'

According to Sergeant Giskaas's wife, Sue, 'Mini-Mark' was created four years ago when Sergeant Giskaas worked as an expeditor for his squadron.

"At the time, Mark was an expeditor riding alone in his truck all day," she explained. "He made the silly comment that it would be nice to have someone to talk to."

That's when the idea of 'Mini-Mark' came to be.

Using one of her crochet sets as a guide, Mrs. Giskaas created the 'Mini-Mark' in one week's time.

When Sergeant Giskaas brought his newly created buddy with him to work one day, his coworkers suggested that he take his little clone with him on all his

travels. So he did.

The duo's first trip together was in the summer of 2002 when Sergeant Giskaas was sent on a temporary duty assignment to Maple Flag, an air-to-air combat exercise held in Alberta, Canada.

It was there that 'Mini-Mark' got his first ride in an F-16.

According to Sergeant Giskaas, 'Mini-Mark' became an ace when his co-pilot shot down six simulated enemy aircraft during the exercise.

Six months later, Sergeant Giskaas had orders to deploy to Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia.

While at PSAB, 'Mini-Mark' logged in a few more flight hours and combat experience with his co-pilot, the vice commander of the 363rd Air Expeditionary Wing.

On one fateful day during the two month deployment, "Mini-Mark" ran into his "girlfriend," Airman Engel, a weapons loader from Sergeant Giskaas's home unit.

Airman Engel remembers the day she ran into the little plush Airman.

"I remember meeting him at the pool," she explained. "He was wearing a swimsuit. I couldn't believe it."

Mrs. Giskaas explained how she creates outfits for 'Mini-Mark,' "whenever the occasion arises."

When Sergeant Giskaas took his wife to Hawaii during another deployment,

Mrs. Giskaas said she made 'Mini-Mark' an outfit to wear for vacation.

"He had to have a couple of Hawaiian shirts and some



Courtesy photo

ABOVE: Senior Master Sgt. Mark Giskaas, 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron production superintendent, poses with his partner, 'Mini-Mark', after being locked out of his vehicle. BELOW: Senior Airman Alissa Engel, a 332nd EAMXS weapons loader, poses with "Mini-Mark" inside the squadron.

shorts," she explained. "In fact all three of us had matching Hawaiian shirts and hats to go along (with it)."

After a few stateside assignments and exercises, Sergeant Giskaas got word that he would be deploying to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mrs. Giskaas was quick to whip up a new uniform for the foot-tall action figure.

This time sporting a kevlar (plaster) helmet and a G-suit (at the advice of fellow coworkers), 'Mini-Mark' set out for the desert.

It was not long before Mini-Mark's fan from the last desert deployment, Airman Engel, set eyes on him once again.

Airman Engel also deployed with the 120th FW to the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron here.

The four-year Guard veteran said she was pleasantly surprised to see the little man that had now become the unit's mascot.

But 'Mini-Mark' didn't waste time chatting with the ladies, instead he stayed mission focused and hitched a ride on another F-16 to test out his G-suit.

During one mission with Maj. Rustan "Two Dawgs" Schwichtenberg, 'Mini-Mark'

helped provide close air support for Marines engaged in combat on the ground. After their F-16 entered the area, the enemy withdrew from the engagement.

Now, after serving here in Iraq for a month, Sergeant Giskaas and his little clone, 'Mini-Mark' are set to go home this weekend.

Mrs. Giskaas said she's ready for her husband of 21 years to return home.

"My biggest plans for Mark would be to have him take over the checkbook again," she said jokingly.

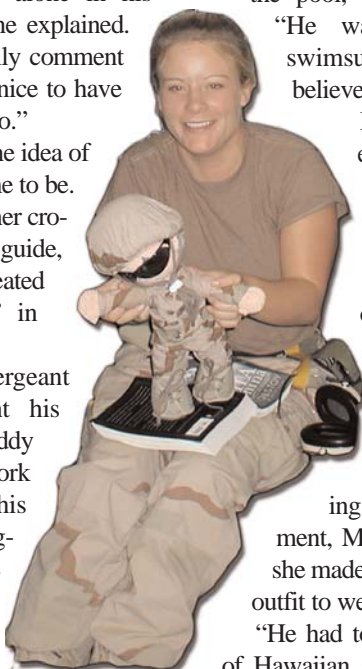
As for 'Mini-Mark', plans are set in motion for the little clone to have a few new brothers in the family.

Mrs. Giskaas said she plans to make a couple more 'Minis' for her two sons also serving in the Guard.

"I'm in the process of making a 'Mini-Matt' and 'Mini-Eric,'" she said. "Now that they have started traveling and doing their own thing, they need minis too."

Mrs. Giskaas said she hopes the two new 'Minis', like 'Mini-Mark,' attract interesting people and create interesting stories for her two sons.

"We just think of the laughs it is going to give us when we're old," she explained.





PUBLIC HEALTH NOTE

"Public Health Note" is a column that answers frequently asked public health questions. Submit questions to public.health@BLAB.aorcentaf.af.mil.

Q: Someone told me I had the wrong anti-malaria pills. What should I do? And what about outdoor bug zappers...do they work?

A: Here at Balad, there are only two pills authorized, chloroquine and doxycycline. These are the drugs CENTAF approved to help prevent malaria infection in deployed personnel. If you arrived without either pill, or with some other medication, please stop by the 332nd EMEDS clinic; Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 8 a.m. to noon.

While doxycycline is an authorized anti-malarial medication, chloroquine is the drug of choice. It

has fewer side effects and compliance is better since it is taken weekly as compared to daily. To switch to chloroquine, call the 332nd EMEDS clinic to see if we have sufficient medication on hand to switch you over.

Keep in mind that anti-malarial medications are not 100% effective. Make sure you take your medication in combination with application of DEET repellent on exposed skin, wearing permethrin treated DCUs and to the extent possible, limiting outdoor activities between dusk and dawn. If you're thinking about getting a bug zapper, DON'T because they don't work.

Bug zappers attract more insects than they kill and they are prohibited on at this base.

Do yourself a favor. If you have an outdoor bug zapper, get rid of it.

Meet your neighbor



Airman 1st Class Jennifer Hurley

Home station: Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

Unit: 332nd ESVS

Arrived in the AOR: May 31

Family: Mom, Dad and sisters, Steph and Kim

Hobbies: Softball

How do I contribute to the mission? I provide the men and women of LSA Anaconda and Balad with recreation, fitness lodging and mortuary services at a level that constantly exceeds customer expectations.

What is your favorite aspect of this deployment? My favorite aspect is getting off work and playing Phase 10 with my coworkers.

Besides my family, what do I miss back home? I miss my car.

EOD

Continued from Page 3

The remotely controlled robots play a significant role in EOD accomplishing its mission. The flight has more robots than people.

The flight currently has 12 Airmen permanently assigned. In addition, they bring in technicians from other bases in theater for two-week rotations to help with the workload.

Keeping the robots ready for action is critical.

"The environment is really hard on the equipment -- really hard on the robots. We live and die by the robots," said Chief Williamson. "We spend a lot of time making sure the equipment is ready to go. When the time comes and we respond to a call that's not the time to make sure everything is together."

With the high operations tempo, the EOD Airmen rely on the training they've received prior to arriving in

Iraq.

"It's a big change from home. There we spend most of our time training to get the chance to go out in the field and do our jobs in the real world," said Sergeant Brady. "All the training has definitely paid off."

"They're trained for our mission and have the right mind set," said Chief Williamson. Morale is

extremely high. We take care of business and get the job done. These guys get a lot of satisfaction out of accomplishing the mission."

This deployment is providing an abundance of real-world experience the EOD technicians

here will be able to draw upon for the rest of their careers -- experience they can't get at home stations.

"At home we train with rubber and plastic rockets. We come here and have real ones landing on base," said Master Sgt. Kent, chief of EOD operations deployed from Incirlik AB, Turkey. "I'll respond to more UXOs in three months here than I have in my entire 21-year career."

"I'll respond to more UXOs in three months here than I have in my entire 21-year career."

Master Sgt. Kent
332nd CES/EOD Operations chief

Briefly speaking —

Education office opens Monday

Services will open Balad's first education center Monday morning. Tests will be given Mondays through Wednesdays from 8 to 11 a.m. and Thursdays from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the movie tent in Tuskegee Town. For more information, call 458-1896, or visit <http://blab-web.blab.aorcentaf.af.mil/332%20svs/educationcenter.htm>.

Airman's Council formed

Have an idea on how to make life better at Balad or just want to get involved in community projects? The 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing has formed an Airmen's Council. If you are an E-1 through E-4, and want to make a difference, now is the time to step up. Talk to your unit first sergeant or nearest chief to volunteer.



Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Cohen Young

Senior Airman John Wyman, an air traffic controller stationed at McChord Air Force Base, Wash., waits for his cue to play his harmonica while Staff Sgt. Ricky Hendricks, Jr., sings in the background during their performance. Sergeant Hendricks is a heavy equipment operator stationed at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo.



First Lieutenant Carlos Jayme, a communications officer at Lackland AFB, Texas, plays the violin during one of the performances.



Senior Airman Starrlett Johnson-Derr, a security forces entry controller at Dover AFB, Del., sits in the lap of Senior Airman Shawn Weimar, 332d Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, during one of the performances Saturday.



(Left to right) Second Lt. Laura Richmond, a squadron section commander at Ramstein AB, Germany, Senior Airman Stacy Bensing, an information manager for the Louisville Air National Guard, Ky., and Airman 1st Class Michelle Duque, a financial specialist at Fairchild AFB, Wash., entertain hundreds of troops at the Sustainer Theater Saturday.

Airman First Class David Weaver, a financial manager stationed at McGuire AFB, N.J., performs.



Staff Sergeant Kristina Robinson, a radio communications craftsman at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., performs Saturday.

Skimming over the tree tops



Air Force/Staff Sgt. D. Myles Cullen

A Florida National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter soars over the palm forests of northern Iraq July 20.

Defense briefs

Army accelerates future combat system

WASHINGTON - For the Army, the future is now. Army officials are accelerating the delivery of selected future combat systems to the current force. Under the program, the Army will speed up deployment of some segments of the system. They will begin reaching the field in fiscal 2008, rather than in fiscal 2014. The five technologies that will be accelerated are the non-line-of sight cannon, the non-line-of-site launch system, the unattended ground sensors, two classes of unmanned aerial vehicles and armed robotic vehicles.

U.S. troops in Seoul to relocate by 2008

WASHINGTON - Representatives of the Republic of Korea and the United States finalized agreements to relocate all U.S. Forces from the Seoul Metropolitan Area to the Pyongtaek area. The decision was reached during the 10th round of the Future of the Alliance talks held in Washington D.C. last week. The agreement fulfills a commitment made by President Bush and President Roh at their summit meeting in Washington in May 2003. There are approximately 8,000 U.S. servicemembers in the Seoul Metropolitan Area. The relocation of U.S. forces out of Seoul will be completed by December 2008.

Congress sends \$416.2 billion budget to President

WASHINGTON - A 3.5 percent pay raise, elimination of out-of-pocket housing expenses and continued funding for military transformation are all parts of the Defense Appropriations Act that Congress has sent to President Bush.

The act calls for \$416.2 billion in spending in fiscal 2005. Excluding supplementals and the \$25 billion Emergency Wartime Appropriation to cover the costs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, this is still a \$25 billion increase over fiscal 2004. Congress passed the legislation July 22.

Overseas voter registration progresses

Samantha L. Quigley

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - With only 102 days before the November general elections, DoD is working hard to make sure that service members and their families stationed overseas have the opportunity to vote.

"We are taking aggressive steps in the area of voting," DoD spokesperson Air Force Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke, said. "The secretary of defense has directed command support and personal involvement at all levels for effective implementation of the voting program throughout the services."

As of July 9, a total of 340,000 Federal Post Card

For more information

For more information, visit the FVAP Web site at <http://www.fvap.gov/> or call the Voting Information Center at DSN 425-1343 or toll free 1-800-8683 for assistance.

Applications for registration to vote had been sent to requesters. That's 90,000 more than for election year 2000.

These cards are essential if you are a Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act citizen who intends to vote in the general elections. It serves as both a registration and absentee request form and is accepted by all states and territories.

Since states' requirements vary, check the state-by-state instructions on the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site to determine the deadline for submission of a registration card and absentee ballot request.

The same is true for submitting a ballot; those deadlines differ by state too.

Several programs have been implemented to ensure that as

many service members and their families who want to vote are able to, Krenke said.

Those programs include printing information about voting on every service member's pay stub each month and mandating that voting assistance officers contact with each service member one on one to ensure he or she gets an application ballot. DoD is also providing absentee ballot request forms to units preparing for deployment.

Each service also has its own methods of further emphasizing the importance of voting. For example, the Army adjutant general sent a mass e-mail to soldiers with instructions on how to register to vote.

T-Town Chapel Schedule

Sundays:

Protestant Religious Education, 8 a.m.
Protestant Worship, 9 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
Catholic Mass, 10:30 a.m.
LDS Sacrament meeting, 7 p.m.
LDS S.S., 8 p.m.

Tuesdays:

Catholic Mass, 7 p.m.
Catholic Discussion Group, 8 p.m.

Wednesdays:

Purpose Driven Life, 8 p.m.

Thursdays:

LDS Study Group, 7 p.m.

Fridays:

Catholic Mass, 5:30 p.m.
Women's Fellowship, 7 p.m.

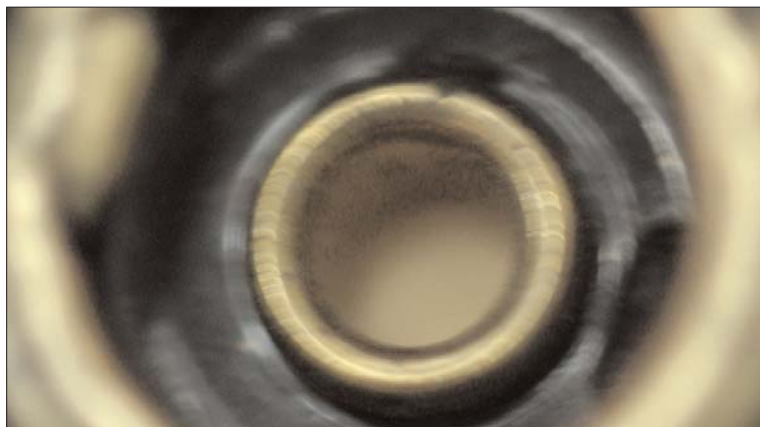
Saturdays:

Protestant Communion, 7 p.m.

Daily:

Band of Brothers (Men's Fellowship), 8:30 p.m.

Know what this is?

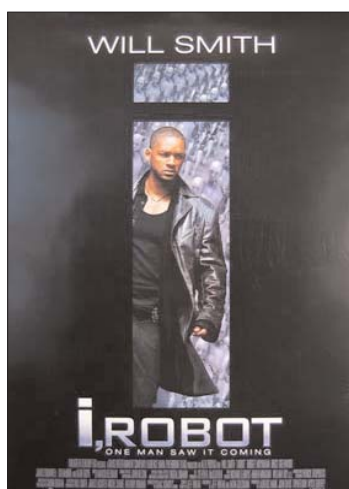


Air Force/Staff Sgt. Jason Lake

Each week, the Red Tail Flyer staff will take a photo from around Balad. If you can identify the object or item, shoot us an e-mail at redtailflyer@blab.aorcentaf.af.mil with "Identify This" in the subject block. The first person who sends in the correct answer wins a prize and will get their name printed in this publication. Congratulations to Capt. Zack Jensen, 332nd Expeditionary Logistic Readiness Squadron, who correctly identified last week's fire extinguisher.



Sustainer Movie Schedule



Schedule is subject to change

Today
3 p.m. - I, Robot
6 p.m. - I, Robot
9 p.m. - I, Robot

Saturday
3 p.m. - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
6 p.m. - I, Robot
9:30 p.m. - The Chronicles of Riddick

Sunday
3 p.m. - The Stepford Wives
6:30 p.m. - The

Chronicles of Riddick
9 p.m. - I, Robot

Monday
3 p.m. - The Chronicles of Riddick
6 p.m. - The Stepford Wives
9 p.m. - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

Tuesday
3 p.m. - I, Robot
6 p.m. - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

8:30 p.m. - The Stepford Wives

Wednesday
3 p.m. - Breakin' All the Rules
6 p.m. - I, Robot
9 p.m. - The Chronicles of Riddick

Thursday
3 p.m. - The Stepford Wives
6 p.m. - The Chronicles of Riddick
9 p.m. - I, Robot



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